



Questionnaire for candidates for the office of
Member, San Francisco Board of Education
General Election, November 6, 2012

*Please return this questionnaire electronically to contact_us@phdemclub.org no later than **Tuesday, September 4**, to confirm your speaking slot at the September 11 endorsement meeting.*

Candidate name: Victoria Lo
Contact person: Contact candidate directly
Mailing address: 461 3 rd Ave San Francisco, CA 94118
Telephone: (206) 356-1710
Email address: victorialo2012@gmail.com
Web address: www.victorialo2012.com

Please write a brief response (≤ 150 words) to each question. We will make these questionnaires available to the public before the endorsement meeting.

1. Why are you running for office?

Education has always held a special place in my heart. With parents who had no formal education, I feel extremely proud and blessed to be a graduate of the public school system. That is why I am excited to run for the San Francisco Board of Education.

2. What are your qualifications for this position? If you are an incumbent, describe your major accomplishments while in office.

Over the past decade, I have served in the capacity of an adviser, educator, mentor, and organizer for various educational initiatives. Highlights include:

In 2007, I was the Founding Director for a non-profit STEM program for disadvantaged middle and high school students. I recruited, taught, and mentored the first class of 15 students through the development of science fair projects.

From 2008 to 2010, I was an Executive Team Member for the THINK Scholars Program, a national scholarship program with the vision to make science and technology research and development accessible to all high school students.

3. What are the top three challenges facing public education in San Francisco? If elected, what will you do to meet these challenges?

Improve math and science education

In recent years, American students have lagged behind their international counterparts in math and science performance. Because the heart of the US economy depends on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) jobs, there has never been a more crucial time to strengthen our education in these areas. Despite the high unemployment rate, California STEM employers report difficulty in finding qualified employees to fill their vacant positions. If elected, I will push for three years of high school science education, and work with both public and private science and technology organizations to enhance STEM education in our schools.

Expand school-based health services

In the short-term, we must support the existing Wellness Centers that provide youth with basic medical resources and health trainings. In the long-term, schools should duplicate Balboa High School's on-site health clinic. This will provide all students—and low-income students in particular—with the direct access to care that they need. As a Commissioner for the Board of Education, I will work with community health organizations to establish clinics in SFUSD schools.

Bold Action to Narrow the Achievement Gap

First, SFUSD must escalate its efforts to provide students with opportunities for credit recovery. Doing so will not only help students graduate on time, but also place them on track to attend college. Second, as the achievement gap exists across the district, each school must play its part and continue to report reform measures taken to support its teachers in this fight. Finally, I will support any reasonable revenue-generating measure to give our schools the support they need. San Francisco can step up where the state has failed.

4. What are your ideas for lessening the achievement gap between students of different backgrounds?

See above

5. What are your views on charter schools?

There is no consensus on whether charter school performance is better than public school performance. However, some charter schools have models (i.e. KIPP Charter Schools) that have proven to be quite successful. Given this knowledge, my stance is that charter

schools should only be established if there is extremely compelling evidence of its potential for success.

6. What further improvements would you make to the current school assignment system, in particular with regards to access to neighborhood schools?

This is a difficult issue to take a stance on.

It took two years for the district to decide on and implement the new school assignment system. School board members and the teachers union feared costs associated with redesigning the system and thus opposed neighborhood schools.

While I believe that children should not be barred from such a reasonable demand as attending their neighborhood schools due to administrative costs, there needs to be evidence that the majority of people believe in neighborhood schools. Prop H for neighborhood schools was on the ballot once and it did not pass.

Personally, my belief is that the while assignment system should not place the highest priority on assigning each student closest to home, it should definitely be among the top priorities.

7. How would you address the problem of truancy?

The first time a student is truant, drastic measures should be taken. The student's parents should be notified by an administrator and the child should be disciplined. This will make the student less likely to offend again.

8. Do you support or oppose the following Propositions on the November ballot? Please give your reason (≤50 words) for each position.

Proposition 30 X support ___ oppose
Reason:

Proposition 31 X support ___ oppose
Reason:

Proposition 32 ___ support X oppose
Reason:

Thank you for your time, and your commitment to the children of San Francisco. We look forward to seeing you on September 11th.